

Memorandum

To: Budget Coordinating Group

From: Andy Steinberg and Stephanie O’Keeffe

Date: December 14, 2009

Re: Process for override recommendation

Goal: The BCG, by February 5, 2010 will recommend a proposal for the Select Board for an override to place on the ballot for the March 23 election that will specify:

- Whether the voters will be presented with a single question, or more than one question
- If more than one question, the form of the override, pyramid or menu
- The amount(s) to be included
- The specific language for the ballot question

In order to complete this assignment the BCG will need to complete a sequence of tasks that will require substantial work between January 15, when the Town Manager will release his budget at a joint meeting of the Select Board and Finance Committee and February 5, when the packet is mailed to Select Board for its February 8 meeting.

The Town Manager, Superintendent and Library Director have agreed to present the following by January 18, as requested by the Finance Committee:

1. A “level services” budget for FY 11 that would allow you to continue the services that you are providing in FY 10 (except for the operation of the Marks Meadow School).
2. An “estimated available funds” budget for FY 11 based upon funds that are currently projected to be available without an override. This amount is very close to the current year budget, except for the funds from reserves to operate the Marks Meadow School. With this budget, we request that you provide a prioritized list of existing services and programs that would have to be reduced or eliminated, with an indication of the savings for each listed service or program.
3. A budget for FY 11 with a 3% cut in funding from the FY 10 amount, and a prioritized list of services and programs that would have to be reduced or eliminated, with an indication of the savings for each listed service or program.
4. Any other factors that should be considered, such as potential loss of certifications, and an indication of the cost to address this matter, and
5. A concise statement describing the difference in what you are providing to our community, the manner in which you are providing it and the fees charged to users between FY 09 and FY 10.

The challenge is to process this information and make considered consensus agreements about the override proposal(s) to present to voters to present to the Select Board. This can happen by proceeding through steps as outlined on the chart that is presented below. We suggest who might be responsible for each step and the date by which it must be completed.

This process assumes a basic methodology that begins with assumptions of the current allocation of funds to each operating budget category (i.e., schools, region, municipal functions, library) and the priorities as designated by the Superintendent, Town Manager, and Library Director. This will enable us to visualize what can be funded at 3% below current funds, estimated available funds (current year budget), an additional \$2 million, an additional \$3 million, and an additional \$4 million. This is not a suggestion that the BCG or Select Board consider these amounts for an override but to enable the BCG to visualize what overrides in these amounts will provide for the community. The BCG can then consider the need in each budget category, whether the allocation might change from the current percentages, and the override questions presented in the first paragraph.

<u>Step</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Completion date</u>
1. review budgets to assure that information presented is complete	BCG co-chairs	January 19
2. formal presentation of each budget and questions	BCG	January 21
3. update financial projection model using budgets as submitted and revised revenue estimates [*]	Finance Committee, or subcommittee of FC, with assistance of John Musante	January 25
4. consider override issues identified as BCG “goals” on page 1 of this memorandum	BCG	January 26
5. make preliminary agreements	BCG	January 28
6. draft recommendation memorandum to Select Board	BCG co-chairs	February 1
7. review memorandum and finalize recommendations	BCG	February 4
8. memorandum completed for mailing to Select Board	BCG co-chairs	February 5

This assumes BCG meetings on January 21, January 26, January 28, and February 4. We will need to do a lot of work at those meetings to complete the work envisioned for steps 2, 4, 5, and 7. The meetings on those days will need to be longer than the 90 minuets that we usually plan for BCG. We will need to consider the time needed for those meetings as we review the proposed process. So please bring your calendars to the December 17 meeting. Remember, this is a public process. All documents must be available to the public and the BCG should provide an opportunity to hear from the public.

^{*} To the extent possible, this budget presentation should incorporate our previous request that the Finance Committee project the effect of an override on Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013.